



California Postsecondary Education Commission

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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University of the Pacific Awarded \$991,948 Improving Teacher Quality Grant

SACRAMENTO — October 22, 2007 — University of the Pacific (UOP) in Stockton has won funding for a new professional development project to help improve teaching in kindergarten through second grade in the core content area of science. The university was awarded a four-year grant of \$991,948 by the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) in a statewide competition. The project, titled “K-2 STARTS: Science and Technology Assistance for Rural Teachers and Small Districts,” will work with about 35 teachers in 16 districts across four counties in the northern San Joaquin Valley.

K-2 STARTS will bring together faculty from the UOP School of Education and various science departments with educators from the San Joaquin County Office of Education’s Office of Science and Special Projects to provide intensive summer institutes in science content and pedagogy. These will be followed by ongoing training meetings in several County Offices of Education, and local “cluster meetings” of small groups of teachers who will work together regularly to improve their instruction. The focus will be on inquiry-based science education that integrates writing and math through science notebooks kept by the students and used to assess their science achievement. The project will also train teacher leaders to help support continuing activities in their schools and districts.

The grant is part of the federal Improving Teacher Quality Program funded under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. It is the latest edition of a long-standing federal program aimed at improving student achievement through professional development for teachers. In the two decades that CPEC has administered the program, more than \$93 million in grants have been awarded to colleges and universities working with high-need K-12 schools throughout California. The 2007 grants all focus on supporting teachers in kindergarten through second grade in participating schools. They also require rigorous evaluation research to demonstrate how the professional development affects student achievement as well as teacher practice.

While the professional development provided by the grants is vitally needed, the research requirement is especially important, according to CPEC Executive Director Murray Haberman. He observed that “Being required to demonstrate the impact of the professional development on

student achievement, not just on teacher practice, is critical and supports CPEC's overall commitment to accountability in educational programs."

Olivia Singh, chair of the Commission, says the grants play an important role in making sure every student has a highly qualified teacher. "The program has had a long-term impact on helping teachers strengthen their content knowledge and their understanding of effective teaching strategies—key elements of education reform," noted Singh. "University of the Pacific and its partner schools should be proud of the quality of their proposal and its potential for improving teaching and learning in the northern San Joaquin Valley."

The California Postsecondary Education Commission advises the Governor and Legislature on higher education policy and fiscal issues. Its primary focus is to ensure that the state's educational resources are used effectively to provide Californians with postsecondary education opportunities. More information about the Commission and its work can be found on its website at www.cpec.ca.gov. For more information about the state program, contact Karen Humphrey, Administrator, Improving Teacher Quality Program, at 916-445-1504 or khumphrey@cpec.ca.gov. For information on the project described above, contact Dr. Lynn Beck at 209-946-2680 or lbeck@pacific.edu.

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